

# ***CLARK COUNTY WASHINGTON***

## **COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT**

**FISCAL YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2001**

Greg Kimsey, Clark County Auditor

John Ingram, CFA  
Sandra Barnes

Mary Jo Zieman, CPA  
Brenda Yost

Clark County Auditor's Office – Financial Services  
Clark County Treasurer's Office



## AUDITOR

GREG KIMSEY

June 25, 2002

To the Honorable Board of Commissioners and Citizens of Clark County:

In accordance with the provision of Chapter 36.22 of the Revised Code of Washington, we are pleased to submit the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report of Clark County for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2001. The financial statements are presented in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and audited in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards by independent auditors, the Office of the Washington State Auditor.

The County has elected to early implement the requirements of Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement #34, Basic Financial Statements – and Management's Discussion and Analysis – for State and Local Governments, within our 2001 financial report. Accordingly, this annual report represents a dramatic change in governmental reporting with the inclusion of government-wide statements that are based on full accrual accounting and include capital assets and long term debt. The format and purpose of these changes are explained in some detail within the Management's Discussion and Analysis, which immediately proceeds the basic financial statements in the financial section of this report.

This report consists of management's representations concerning the finances of the County. Consequently, responsibility for the accuracy of the data and the completeness and fairness of the presentation, including all disclosures, rests with the management of Clark County. Clark County has established a comprehensive internal control framework to provide a reasonable basis for making these representations. Management of the County has established internal controls that are designed both to protect the government's assets from loss, theft, or misuse and to compile sufficient reliable information for the preparation of the County's financial statements in conformity with GAAP. Because the cost of internal controls should not outweigh their benefits, the County's internal controls have been designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements will be free from material misstatements. To the best of our knowledge and belief, the data, as presented, is accurate in all material respects and disclosures necessary to enable the reader to gain an understanding of the County's financial activities have been included.

The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report is developed to provide meaningful financial information to legislative bodies, creditors, investors, teachers and students of public finance and the public. It is presented in three sections: introductory, financial, and statistical. The introductory section includes this transmittal letter and a presentation of the County's organizational structure and elected officials. The financial section includes the independent auditor's report, management discussion and analysis, government-wide statements, fund statements, notes to the financial statements, and

combining and individual fund financial statements and schedules. The statistical section presents various financial and demographic information generally presented on a multi-year basis.

The Office of the Washington State Auditor conducts an annual audit of the financial statements of Clark County as required by state law. The goal of the independent audit was to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements of the County for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2001, are free from material misstatement. The independent audit involved examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, assessing the overall financial statement presentation. The auditor concluded, based upon the audit, that there was a reasonable basis for rendering an unqualified opinion that Clark County's financial statements for fiscal year ended December 31, 2001, are fairly presented in conformity with GAAP. The independent auditor's report is presented as the first component of the financial section of this report.

Their examination is conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller of the United States, and the provisions of OMB Circular A-133, *Audits of State, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations*.

The County is required to undergo an annual single audit in conformity with the provisions of the Single Audit Act of 1984 and U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-133, *Audits of State, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations*. Information related to this single audit act, including the schedule of expenditures of federal awards and state/local financial assistance, findings and recommendations, and auditor's reports on the internal control structure and compliance with applicable laws and regulations, will be issued in a separately issued Single Audit Report.

GAAP require that management provide a narrative introduction, overview, and analysis to accompany the basic financial statements in the form of Management's Discussion and Analysis (MD&A). This letter of transmittal is designed to complement the MD&A and should be read in conjunction with it. Clark County's MD&A can be found immediately following the report of the independent auditors.

## **Profile of Clark County**

Clark County, incorporated in 1849, is located in the southwestern portion of the State of Washington, on the Columbia River, approximately 80 miles from the Pacific Ocean. The Columbia River forms the western and southern boundaries of the County and provides over 41 miles of river frontage. The North Fork of the Lewis River forms the northern boundary of the County and Skamania County and the Cascade Range form the eastern boundary. The land area of the County encompasses 405,760 acres, approximately two-thirds of which lie in the foothills of the Cascade Range.

Located directly across the Columbia River from Portland, Oregon and 150 miles south of Seattle, the County is one of the fastest growing areas in the Pacific Northwest. The population for Clark County at year-end of 2001 was 352,600, compared to 345,000 in

2000. The Columbia River and the proximity of the Pacific Ocean have a strong influence on the economy, climate, and recreational activities of the area.

The County enjoys a diversified and growing economy with a strong manufacturing base, as well as a solid commercial sector, valuable port activities and important government and service sectors. Additionally, the County is well served by a variety of transportation facilities. Interstates 5 and 205 access the Portland area, and the Ports of Vancouver, Ridgefield, and Camas/Washougal offer port facilities which capitalize on the Columbia River's status as a fresh water, deep draft harbor between Canada and California. Transcontinental railroads, trucking firms, bus lines, and the Portland International Airport also serves the County

Clark County is a *statute county*, which means that the organization of the County is prescribed by state statute. Locally elected officials include the County Assessor, Auditor, Clerk, Prosecuting Attorney, Sheriff, Treasurer, eight Superior Court Judges, five District Court Judges, and the three member Board of County Commissioners. These elected officials govern the County and establish policies on the basis of the local community's needs and preferences. The Board of County Commissioners acts as the County's legislative body and appoints a County Administrator who acts as the chief administrative officer of the County and oversees nine major departments.

In accordance with GASB 14 "The Financial Reporting Entity", the County has identified one entity as a component unit. By virtue of its authority to exercise influence over its operations, the County has included the financial statements of the Industrial Revenue Bond Corporation as a blended component unit reported as a special revenue fund. The County also reports its investment in a governmental joint venture: Clark Regional Emergency Services Agency.

The County's biennial budget serves as the foundation for financial planning and control. State law (RCW 36.40) establishes the general requirements of Clark County's biennial budget process. The law requires the County to initiate the budget process on or before the second Monday in July, by requesting budget estimates for the ensuing year from each County department. These estimates must be filed on or before the second Monday in August. The County is required to present a compilation of these estimates, including revenue projections, to the Board of Commissioners upon or before the first Tuesday in September. A compilation of submissions is then prepared, and copies are made available to the public. The Commissioners must schedule a hearing on the budget for the first Monday on October or, if the Board so chooses, the first Monday in December. The budget hearing may be continued from day to day for no more than five days. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Board of Commissioners adopts the budget. Budget-to-actual comparisons are provided in this report for each individual governmental fund for which an appropriated budget has been adopted.

## **Factors Affecting Financial Condition**

The information presented in the financial statements is perhaps best understood when it is considered from the broader perspective of the specific environment within which the County operates.

**Local Economy.** Clark County remains one of the fastest growing counties in the state of Washington, and one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the United States even though population growth has slowed down somewhat. The county's population increased 2.1% in 2001 down from a 3.05% increase in 2000.

The local employment market has worsened considerably, with recent layoffs in several industries in the county. In December 2001, the unemployment rate for the county was 7.6%, (compared to 3.8% in December 2000. The State unemployment rate was 7.1% at the end of 2001. Approximately 13,800 Clark County residents were looking for work at the end of 2001. The total Clark County resident work force numbered approximately 179,500 in December.

New housing continued to dominate the local construction market, with over \$278 million in new single family housing permits issued in 2001. In addition, approximately \$85 million in commercial permits were issued in 2001.

In the next few years, the County will continue to face financial challenges in the form of a growing urban population, potential future annexations, and a projected slowing of the Northwest economic expansion.

**Long-term financial planning.** Early in 2002, the Board of County Commissioners indicated its intent to absorb the Southwest Washington Health District into the County effective January 1, 2003. The County formed the Health District in the early 1920's and contributes a major portion of local funding. The District is a two-county public health agency governed by a 10-member board. An important reason for this decision by the Commissioners was the need to continue to provide excellent public health services in the face of diminishing state funds. The Board believes there is the potential to streamline operations and increase efficiencies. Reorganization planning is currently underway and will be finalized before year-end.

The County also has capital investments planned over the next several years for the following areas:

- Technology infrastructure
- Transportation improvement plan, including sixty-four major projects and several minor projects for over \$182 million.
- Fairgrounds master plan
- Construction of a Health Services Building, which will house County social and health services, non-profit organizations, and other governmental entities involved in providing health related services within the County.

**Cash management policies and practices.** The Clark County Treasurer is empowered by state law to invest cash holdings as directed on behalf of Clark County and other taxing districts. Investments are made in certificates of deposit, bankers acceptances and other authorized investments within guidelines established by the Office of the State Treasurer.

In 1989 the Treasurer's office implemented a local government investment pool. The investment pool allows more flexibility in managing investments and idle cash, and allows for larger deposits for longer periods of time, thus allowing for higher rates of return. The pool currently has an average maturity of approximately nine months. The annualized yield of the pool was 5.28% in 2001, compared to 5.98% in 2000. The average pool balance for 2001 was approximately \$422,000,000 and total interest earnings for the pool was \$21,645,479. The County retains an investment advisory consultant to facilitate cash flow needs for the County and review the investment portfolio on a quarterly basis.

The County also participates in the State of Washington investment pool, which is regulated by the State Treasurer, Governor, State Auditor and Joint legislative audit and review committee.

**Risk management.** Clark County is a protected self-insured entity. Certain property policies, errors and omission policies, officer and employee bonds, and a \$10 million excess liability insurance policy with a \$2 million self-insured retention limit are in place. Three funds are maintained for self-insurance activity where resources are being accumulated to meet potential losses.

The County performed an actuarial study of the General Liability Fund early in 2001 that determined that the self-insurance program was adequately funded.

### **Pension and other post-employment benefits.**

Substantially all County full time employees and qualifying part-time employees participate in one of the statewide public employee retirement systems administered by the Department of Retirement Systems (DRS), under a cost-sharing multiple-employer defined benefit public employee retirement system. The DRS, a department within the primary government of the State of Washington, issues a publicly available comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR) that includes financial statements and required supplementary information for each plan.

The state Pension Funding Council and the director of the Department of Retirement Systems, based on recommendations by the Office of the State Actuary, set employer and employee contribution rates to continue to fully fund the plan. All employers are required to contribute at the level established by state law. The methods used to determine the contribution rates are established under state statute in accordance with chapter 41.40 and 41.45 RCW.

The County also provides post-employment health and dental care benefits for certain retirees and their dependents. At the end of 2001, there were 58 retired employees receiving these benefits, which are financed on a pay-as-you-go basis. GAAP does not require governments to report a liability in the financial statements in connection with an employer's obligation to provide these benefits.

Additional information on the County's pension arrangements and post-employment benefits can be found in the notes to the financial statements.

## **Awards and Acknowledgements**

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to Clark County for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2000. Clark County has received this prestigious award for the last twenty consecutive years. In order to be awarded a Certificate of Achievement, the County must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive annual financial report. This report must satisfy both generally accepted accounting principles and applicable legal requirements.

A Certificate of Achievement is valid for a period of one year only. We believe our current financial report continues to meet the Certificate of Achievement Program's requirements and we are submitting it to the GFOA to determine its eligibility for another certificate.

In addition, the County received the GFOA's Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the fifteenth consecutive year, for its biennial budget document dated 2001/2002. In order to qualify for the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, the County's budget document was judged to be proficient in several categories, including as a policy document, a financial plan, an operating guide, and a communication device.

We express our appreciation to those who have devoted their time to the preparation of this report, especially the Financial Services staff in the Clark County Auditor's office and the Clark County Treasurer's office. We also recognize the professional efforts of the State Auditor's Office in their audit, and the direction and advice they provide us throughout the year.

Finally, we express our sincere appreciation to the Board of County Commissioners for their continued support, and for their tireless efforts in working for the betterment of the community and in making Clark County a great place to live and work.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Kimsey  
Clark County Auditor

John Ingram  
Director of Finance